



The Douglas Plan is designed to promote a healthier lifestyle in women of childbearing age

These seven steps are the path to excellent personal health and planned, informed pregnancy



Developed in memory of
CAROLE A. DOUGLAS,
a dedicated Public Health Nurse
whose career focused on
making our community healthy.

LINCOLN/LANCASTER COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT



CREIGHTON MEDICAL CENTER
SCHOOL OF NURSING

PROGRAM FUNDED IN PART BY THE
COMMUNITY HEALTH ENDOWMENT

2004



*Planning for a
Healthy You*

**THE
DOUGLAS
PLAN**

*A Woman's Guide to
A Healthy Lifestyle*

D IET, EXERCISE & HYGIENE

Reasons:

- Eating a balanced diet along with exercise will help you maintain a healthy weight
- Exercise reduces stress and helps strengthen your immune system

Helpful hints:

- Start your day with a healthy breakfast
- Follow these daily guidelines:
 - 3-4 servings of dairy daily
 - 3-4 servings meat or protein daily
 - 3-5 vegetable servings daily
 - 2-4 servings of fruit daily
 - 6-11 grain servings daily
- Limit salt intake
- Take 400mcg of folic acid daily in a multivitamin supplement. Foods rich in folic acid are dark green leafy vegetables, orange juice and fortified cereals
- Exercise 3-4 x per week. Walking and swimming are the best
- Brush your teeth and bathe daily
- Wash your hands well. It's THE best way to protect yourself from dangerous infections

O MIT DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND SMOKING

Reasons:

- Smoking increases the risk of early, low birth weight babies & SIDS
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is the leading cause of preventable mental retardation in the United States
- Alcohol use and smoking increase the risk of miscarriage or stillbirth
- Smoking and drugs can constrict the blood vessels that bring oxygen and nutrients to the unborn baby
- Illegal drugs increase risk of miscarriage or learning/behavior problems for babies exposed in pregnancy

Helpful hints:

- The best time to stop smoking is before you get pregnant
- Talk with your healthcare professional about any medications you are taking
- Limit caffeine intake to less than 2 cups per day

U NDERLYING HEALTH CONDITIONS

Reasons:

- Family history of certain conditions can impact both personal and pregnancy health
- Illnesses and medical conditions may put you at risk for pregnancy complications
- Women with diabetes or high blood pressure may need special care in pregnancy

Helpful hints:

- Control diabetes and hypertension with diet and exercise
- Visit your healthcare provider regularly to control any current conditions and to help prevent potential complications
- Tell your physician if you have had a high-risk pregnancy in the past

G YNECOLOGICAL VISITS ANNUALLY

Reasons:

- To maintain good reproductive health

Helpful hints:

- Begin yearly visits at age 18 or once you become sexually active
- Get a pap smear and clinical breast exam annually
- Perform a self breast exam monthly

L ACTATION FOR A LIFETIME OF GOOD HEALTH

Reasons:

- Women who breastfeed have less risk of breast, ovarian, and uterine cancers and reduced risk of osteoporosis
- Breastfeeding costs less and helps you lose pregnancy weight faster
- Almost all women can breastfeed
- Research shows that breastfed babies have higher IQs and less risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome
- Breastfeeding enhances babies' immune systems, meaning fewer illnesses

A BSTINENCE & BIRTH CONTROL TO AVOID UNPLANNED PREGNANCY

Reasons:

- Abstinence is the only sure way to avoid pregnancy
- Pregnancy is a lifetime commitment. Prepare yourself
- Planned pregnancy decreases the stress, anxiety, and uncertainty of having a baby before you are ready

Helpful hints:

- Consult your healthcare professional about avoiding pregnancy
- There are many birth control methods available
- Remember that ONE sexual encounter can cause pregnancy
- Seek cultural or spiritual guidance if that is helpful to you
- Seek out community resources that may be available to you

S CREENING AND IMMUNIZATIONS

Reasons:

- Screening and immunization reduce the risk of getting or passing on infectious diseases
- Sexually transmitted diseases can effect your ability to get pregnant

Helpful hints:

- Communicate with your partner about sexual history
- Get checked for STDs if you've been sexually active and encourage your partner to get checked also
- Make sure your immunizations are up to date. For more information contact a healthcare provider
- Wait three months before becoming pregnant if you have just been vaccinated for chicken pox or rubella.